



AUGUST 15, 1956



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## CONGRESSIONAL ROUNDUP

**T**HE second session of the 84th Congress adjourned July 27, only two weeks before the opening of the political convention season. Much major legislation had been passed or rejected during the last few crowded weeks. Mutual security, social security and housing bills were passed at the final meeting, but immigration and civil rights measures died a parliamentary death.

Earlier in the session two measures which Congress had passed—natural gas regulation and the first farm bill—were vetoed. After adjournment, the President vetoed the Rivers and Harbors Act, which authorized \$1.6 billion for local projects; he based his veto on the fact that 32 of the projects, involving \$530 million, had not been given the normal review required by law.

### LEGISLATIVE ACTION

**Trade:** The customs simplification bill (H. R. 6040\*) was passed by the Senate July 18, 1956. The House had acted June 22, 1955. The law now makes export value, the price at which foreign goods are sold to American importers, the basis for determining import duties. The new valuation system will not apply to imports on which it would reduce the duties by 5 per cent or more.

**Sugar Quotas:** The Sugar Act of 1948 was revised and extended through December 31, 1960. Domestic producers, formerly denied any share of allotments in excess of fixed quotas, were granted 55 per cent of all U.S. consumption in excess of 8.5 million tons annually. The foreign share of this excess was cut from 100 per cent to 45 per cent, with Cuba receiving a little over two thirds of this percentage. Existing foreign share allotments were continued: Cuba 96 per cent, other foreign countries, 4 per cent.

**Quotas:** The Senate passed a resolution directing the Tariff Commission "to expedite and wherever practicable to give

priority to escape clause investigations relating to textiles and textile products."

**Surplus Disposal:** The limit on sales of farm surpluses for foreign currencies was increased from \$1.5 billion to \$3 billion. Congress also increased authorized use of surplus commodities for disasters and famine abroad and other emergency foreign relief from \$300 million to \$500 million, with freight charges to be paid from this sum; authorized appointment of a \$15,000-a-year Agricultural Surplus Disposal Administrator; and established a 5-member bipartisan Commission on Increased Industrial Use of Agricultural Products, to report to Congress by June 15, 1957.

Grants of farm surpluses were excepted from the 80 per cent loan basis in the foreign economic aid program authorized by the Mutual Security Act. The Mutual Security appropriation provided that at least one half of the \$50 million aid for Spain shall be used in the form of agricultural commodities.

**Foreign Aid:** Mutual Security Act of 1956 (in millions, in round numbers)

	Budget Request	Authorization	Appropriation
Military Assistance.....	\$2,925	\$2,225	\$2,017
Defense Support.....	1,131	1,175	1,162
Development Assistance..	170	193	250
Technical Cooperation..	157 <sup>1</sup>	157 <sup>1</sup>	152 <sup>1</sup>
Other Programs.....	289	178	185
Total.....	\$4,672	\$3,928	\$3,766

<sup>1</sup>Includes \$15.5 million for U. S. contribution to U. N. Technical Assistance Program.\*

**Trade Study:** A Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, headed by Rep. Boggs (D., La.), will conduct an investigation of customs, tariffs, trade agreements authority and trade agreements, during the fall.

**Foreign Aid Studies:** A special Senate Committee was created to make "exhaustive studies" of foreign aid and its relation to the national interest, the report of its findings and recommendations to be made by January 31, 1957. The Committee was directed to make "full use" of the help of private persons and organizations and was empowered to use subpoenas to secure information.

Sen. Green (D., R.I.) is chairman of the special Committee, composed of members of the Foreign Relations Committee and the chairmen and ranking minority members of the Appropriations and Armed Services Committees.

The members and staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee are conducting a study of foreign aid objectives.

**Treaties:** The Senate approved 12 treaties, protocols and conventions, including: a 3-year extension of the International Wheat Agreement; treaties of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation with Nicaragua and The Netherlands; a treaty with Iran to establish a reciprocal basis for the protection of American citizens and commerce; conventions with Honduras and France on double taxation, and three customs conventions.

**Payments to ILO, FAO:** The Senate authorized increased ceilings, from \$2 million to \$3 million for the U.S. contribution to the Food and Agriculture Organization, and from \$1.75 million to \$3 million for the International Labor Organization, with the proviso that the increased ILO payment cannot be made until employer and employee delegates from Communist countries are unseated. The Senate specified that the annual U.S. contribution to FAO and ILO cannot exceed the existing percentage of the total annual budget for either organization (31.5 per cent for FAO, 25 per cent for ILO).

**Communist China and the U.N.:** Both houses of Congress passed unanimously a resolution restating congressional opposition to the admission of Communist China to the U.N. or any of its agencies.

**Water Pollution:** The Water Pollution Control Act was extended and strengthened. It authorized \$500 million to be spent in matching funds to help communities build sewage disposal plants; authorized \$100,000 for research fellowships; required the Surgeon General to help states prepare comprehensive control programs and conduct research projects, and specified procedures for en-

forcing pollution rules that would be instituted in either the state where pollution originates or where it is discharged; established a 9-member Water Pollution Control Advisory Board to be appointed by the President.

**Watershed Protection:** The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act was amended, broadening its scope to include non-agricultural programs such as municipal water supply and stream-flow regulation.

**Flood Insurance:** Authorized federal government to write \$3 billion worth of flood insurance, permitting direct loan contracts to cover flood losses of persons not covered by insurance policies. Lower rates could be offered to homeowners in low-income brackets.

**Upper Colorado Development:** A \$760 million irrigation and reclamation project for the Upper Colorado River Basin was approved. It will include building of dams, reservoirs, power plants and transmission facilities.

**Security Commission:** Extended the deadline for the report of the bipartisan Commission on Government Security until June 30, 1957, and authorized funds for expanding the staff from 48 to 80.

**Agriculture:** A revised farm bill was passed, setting up an acreage reserve or "soil bank" program to compensate producers for reducing their 1956-57 crops of basic commodities below their basic acreage allotments under the price support program. Total compensation for participation in the program was limited to \$750 million for any one year's crops. The bill also established a separate conservation reserve program and limited total compensation to \$450 million in any one calendar year.

Earlier the House sustained the President's veto of a measure providing a return to rigid 90 per cent price supports and use of a dual parity formula.

**Highway Construction:** A 13-year, \$30 billion federal-state road building program was authorized, providing for new taxes on gasoline, tires, certain vehicles and other highway-use items, to yield \$14.8 billion over a 14-year period.

#### There'll Be Some Changes Made

There have been four increases in paper prices in the last 18 months, totaling about 25 per cent. The printer of *The National Voter* cannot absorb these increases any longer. Nor can the League budget absorb them. Either we continue *The National Voter* as you know it and exceed the budget, or we make changes in the publication in order to stay within the budget.

We have chosen the latter course.

During the remainder of 1956 we will experiment with paper and format, in an attempt to get the best value for money spent. You will find *The National Voter* changing its appearance from issue to issue during this period, at the end of which we will announce plans for the remaining three months of the fiscal year. The trial period also will provide a basis for comparison on which the 1957 national Council can determine the League's 1957-58 budget.

**Social Security:** A new program of Old Age and Survivors' Insurance benefits for totally and permanently disabled workers at age 50 was set up with a separate trust fund from which disability payments would be made. The age at which women are eligible for OASI benefits was reduced from 65 to 62.

**Housing:** Mortgage terms for elderly persons and for urban renewal projects were liberalized. Controversy over public housing delayed passage until just before adjournment—the final bill carried the amount requested by the President, 35,000 units for two years.

**Special School Aid:** Two earlier laws providing federal aid to school districts overburdened because of federal installations were extended until June 30, 1958, and \$378 million was authorized for the 2-year period.

**Government Accounting:** To improve government budgeting and accounting procedures, Congress authorized the executive branch to prepare the budget on a cost basis and make changes in its accounting system.

#### WHAT THE 84TH DIDN'T DO

**OTC (H. R. 5550\*):** Although reported favorably by the House Ways and Means Committee, the bill to permit U.S. participation in the Organization for Trade Cooperation was not considered by the House.

**Bricker Amendment (S. J. Res. 1†):** The Senate Judiciary Committee reported a revised version of the so-called Bricker Amendment to limit the President's treaty-making powers, but no further action was taken.

**Executive Agreements:** The Senate passed a bill to require international agreements other than treaties to be transmitted to the Senate within 60 days after they have been concluded. The House did not act.

**Immigration:** No action was taken on measures to make changes in the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act of 1953.

**D. C. Home Rule (S. 669\*):** The Senate passed a bill June 29, 1955, granting the District of Columbia limited self-government, but the House Committee refused to consider it. An attempt to bring the measure to the floor for a vote, by means of a discharge petition, failed.

**Security Risks:** Senate and House Committees considered bills to affirm the government's authority to fire any employee on security grounds. No further action was taken.

**Sedition Laws:** The Senate Judiciary Committee reported a bill to restore the validity of state sedition laws, after the Supreme Court ruled, in a Pennsylvania case, that the federal government had pre-emptive rights in this field. No further action was taken.

**Electoral Reform:** The Senate killed a proposed constitutional amendment to

change the method of electing the President, by sending it back to Committee.

**Campaign Spending:** The Senate failed to consider a measure to establish limits and controls over campaign spending.

**School Construction Aid:** The House rejected a bill to provide \$1.6 billion grants to states over a 4-year period, after adopting an amendment to bar aid to states with segregated schools and turning down an Administration proposal to give aid to states according to need.

**Atomic Reactors:** The Senate passed a bill directing the Atomic Energy Commission to build large-scale atomic power demonstration reactors, but the proposal was defeated in the House.

**Area Redevelopment:** The Senate passed a bill to provide federal aid to areas with chronic unemployment, and a House Committee reported a similar bill. No further action was taken.

**Hells Canyon:** The Senate defeated a bill to authorize construction, operation and maintenance of a federal dam at Hells Canyon on the Snake River between Idaho and Oregon.

**Niagara Power:** The Senate passed a bill to give New York State authority to construct and operate a power project at Niagara Falls. The proposal died in the House Rules Committee.

**Civil Rights:** A bill establishing a bipartisan Commission on Civil Rights was passed by the House but died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

\* Indicates League support.

† Indicates League opposition.

#### LWV and UNESCO

Mrs. Waldo E. Stephens is the new representative of the League of Women Voters of the United States on the U. S. National Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. She was appointed to succeed Mrs. Tor Hylbom, who upon her election to the national Board of the League at the 1956 Convention resigned from the UNESCO post.

Mrs. Stephens came on the League's national Board in 1949, following a successful year as U.N. chairman for the Oklahoma League, and served through the 1956 Convention.

#### THE NATIONAL VOTER

VOL. VI AUGUST 15, 1956 NO. 7

Published monthly by the League of Women Voters of the U. S., with two issues during the months of February, March, April and June.

1026 17th Street, N. W.  
Washington 6, D. C.

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Entered as second-class matter, April 9, 1951, at the Post Office, Washington, D. C., under the act of March 3, 1879.  
Subscriptions: \$1.00 per year.

